



BodyLife 101
Tom Rempel – Faith Bible Church
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Again, good morning. Would you take your Bible, please, and turn with me to the book of **Ephesians**? I would like for us to find the fourth chapter. This is the fourth of the key texts that over the last forty years of the whole church-renewal kind of exposure I had, and the thoughts through the word, there are just some key texts that stand out as critical to understanding the Lord's plan for His church and how we fit into it. **Ephesians 4:1-16** is one of those key texts. I left so many, really what I thought were non-negotiable key points in the can at the last service, so I'm not sure which ones will come out this time, and we'll edit as we go. But I want to start by reading these sixteen verses just to set the tone for us.

Ephesians 4:1-16
Unity in the Body of Christ

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.”

⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

MEMORIAL STADIUM PICTURE

There were 89,899 of us. We were out-of-shape experts, critics, as it were. Well, yesterday there were twenty-two eighteen-to-twenty-year-olds down on the field working their fannies off to accomplish a task. My son and I were just up under the balcony, and if Coach Mike needs any advice on how to make the team function better, or any of the players need to know how to play their position better, there’s a whole bunch of experts that were sitting up there with me.

It said to me yesterday that, regrettably, that’s not the church, but it’s starting to look a lot like the church. The church in America at least has kind of morphed into a thing where we have the professionals that do the ministry. Then we have the laity that applauds them or boos them appropriately along the way. And then we wonder why the church has lost the power and the strength that it was designed to have in bringing lost people to faith in Jesus Christ.

We’ve started a series, and this is still part of the introduction to the book of **Acts**, with one more text that I want to unpack with

you before we get to Acts, and it will all start to fall together, Lord willing. We talked at first about **Acts 13:48** that we believe that God's mission for Faith Bible Church is "**Participate in reaching as many as are called to eternal life.**" We talked about that being a relational and incarnational. Jesus says that we are to go and make disciples of all people.

When we understand that we are to reach as many as are called, we are not simply sitting in our living rooms, and we're not going to sit in our offices, we're not going to sit in our church and hope that those people who are desperate for Jesus will come and find us.

Rather we're going to go out among them and be lights. As we said, your friendship will be the bridge that they will cross to come to Jesus. So that's the first, reach as many as are called.

4:58

The second is what we looked at last week, **Bringing all to maturity in Christ Jesus, Colossians 1:28**. So in the process of bringing all, we talked last week about there are three basic essential components to coming to maturity. Once you have been reached with the Gospel, and now you want to strengthen yourself, grow and mature, the first one is the **Proclamation** or hearing the word of God. It is putting yourself in a place where uncompromising explanation and declaration of the truths of God is available, that you would hear the truth of God. And that truth of God that you hear is **Who God is**. He is perfect. He is holy. He is unstained by any sin whatsoever. He is transcendent because of His inability that to amalgamate Himself as it were, with the sin.

The second truth that you need to hear is the **Truth of Man**. We somehow want to believe that in man there is some good that if it is stimulated or agitated, it'll produce sufficient works in order that God will be pleased with him, but the truth of man is that he is fallen, that he is a rebel, that he would not choose God even if he was given the the freedom to do so, and that he is dead, and that there is nothing that he can do, there's nothing we can

command him to do in order to bring him into the right relationship with a holy God.

The third part of the truth we need to hear is the **Truth about Jesus Christ**, that God's eternal Son was willing to come, and He was willing to die where you deserved to die. He had no debt to pay. You had a debt you could not pay. He was willing to come and pay your debt for you, which meant He had to die in your place. He did that for all people, so no matter how bad your sin was, how deep the mire was that you had sunken yourself into, even in the midst of that total expressed depravity, that Jesus Christ, His grace and His love could reach you and rescue from there.

The fourth truth that has to be proclaimed is the **Truth of Belief**. What does it mean to believe? It doesn't just mean to add Jesus to an already over-full life and just say, "Well, I've got my Jesus thing, and I've got all these other things." The truth of belief is that you release your grip on everything that gives you a sense of security and significance, and you embrace totally and completely what Christ is and what Christ has done.

The second thing that you need to come to maturity is **Admonition**, which is someone personally coming alongside and applying God's word to your life, to your situation, explaining to you how these truths about God and man and Christ and belief, how does that relate specifically to you? How is your life transformed as a result of applying what you are learning?

Last of all is the **Instruction** which is an ongoing, deepening understanding of God's word. In that way we are able to present everyone as complete in Christ. We'll come back to that **SLIDE** in a week.

This morning I want to come to **Ephesians 4** where we talk about the third, **Equipping everyone for serving and many for leadership**. Or as we have said over the years, "We are equipping God's people through God's word to do God's work in God's world. The word for "equip" is a word for "mending" or

“repairing.” It’s the word that is used when Jesus is walking along the beach up in Galilee, and He sees the disciples, and they are equipping their nets. They are mending their nets. So when we talk about the equipping ministry of **Ephesians 4**, there are two primary focuses that we have to keep in mind.

The first part of the equipping is that of the **Repairing**. In other words, when we come to Jesus, we come broken. We come wounded. We come useless. There is nothing about us at all that He could use for His glory, His service. So the first thing that happens is that we are re-paired through the ministry of the word and the ministry of His body, the church, as they serve us.

And then secondly, it is the **Preparing** us. It’s equipping us to use the unique spiritual gifts that God has given us to accomplish His purpose. Now let me give you a summary of those.

Ephesians 4:1-16 kind of breaks down into three unfolding themes. The first theme is the theme of **Unity**. The second almost seems contradictory, the theme of **Diversity**, and the third one, then, is the theme of **Maturity**.

Notice what he says ...

Ephesians 4:1-4

¹ Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, (in other words Paul declaring the high price of following and serving the Lord in using your gifts and ministry) I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you were called.

... “I urge you to walk in a manner worthy.” The word “walk” has to do with lifestyle.

10:01

... “so I urge you ...” an the word “worthy” is the word for “of equal weight to.”

So you were called by his grace ...

Ephesians 1:4

“You were chosen in Him before the foundation

of the earth that you would be holy and blameless.”

So you were called in Him.

Now he says I want you to embrace a life that is of equal weight to that. And he summarizes it here in four particular expressions.

Number one, the life that is worthy of the call is a life that is lived in **Humility**. It's not kind of a false humility, but to be humble is simply have seen yourself in light of who Christ is, and to properly compare the two, and to find out that He is everything, and I am nothing. It is an attitude that is the opposite of pride. The problem with humility being thrown in there is that it was not a virtue either to the Greeks or the Romans. If there was any expression of humility it belonged only to the servant class to the slaves. And yet Paul says that if you walk worthy of the Gospel, you have a proper self-assessment in relationship to Christ and what He has done for you.

In the second expression he says, “and in gentleness.” Gentleness is also, some of your translations probably have the word “meekness.” The meaning of gentleness or meekness, it doesn't mean powerlessness. It's not like weakness or something like that, but rather it is the willful surrender of personal rights or freedoms for the good, the benefit, or the blessing of another. It's willing to say, “I will take what I could be and could do, and I will yield that in order to do what is best for You.

The best illustration Jesus uses ...

Matthew 11:28-29

²⁸ “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am (either “meek” or depending on translation) gentle ... in (spirit).

He gives us the suggestion of the yoke, and this is a farm expression. If you have a pulling animal, you have got a young ox, a young calf, and you want to train it to do field work, you don't just simply put a yoke, and yoke is like a big, heavy wooden four-by-six beam that is hollowed out to fit the shoulders or the neck of

the animal. Then there's a big "U" that comes underneath, and it snaps it in place. Then they hook at chain or some kind of a rope or something to that, and then a hook it back here to the plow or whatever implement they are using on the farm. And the idea is that at the command of the owner, that young ox will place it's shoulders against that wooden beam and pull that implement forward.

But most people are smart enough to know you can't take an unbroken ox and strap it into a yoke and get anything less than a rodeo. What they would do is they would take a two-animal yoke, and they would take a seasoned old ox, and they would put one yoke on the old seasoned, trained one and the other on the young one. Then they would go into the field with their implement, and the farmer would give the command and the old, seasoned ox would just lay shoulders into the yoke and would start plodding forward and pulling the implement along.

When that happens, young buck here, he gets all spooked and excited, and so he starts charging forward, so he's ramming into his yoke, and he's just trying his best, and the old, stable one, he just keeps plodding along like that, until the young one finally has either got bleeding shoulders or seriously bruised ones. He looks at himself and thinks, "I don't think working very well."

So the next thing he does he decides, "If that's not going to work then maybe what I ought to do is just plant all four of my hooves, and I'll just walk in place." Well, that doesn't work so well, either, because, as he's doing that the old, seasoned ox, he's just plowing forward, and now he's dragging the young calf along by his hooves. Now his ears are getting bruised and bleeding.

Finally after enough experience of that, he looks over at the old guy and says, "Maybe there's something I could learn from them. I'm a millennial ox, he's like a boomer ox, maybe he knows something I don't know." And he starts to match his stride, stride for stride, with the other, and together they're able to accomplish twice as much as they could alone.

That's the word for gentle. Be gentle. You're not giving up your power or your ability, but you're choosing to channel it to accomplish a purpose. That's what a mature Christian does.

Then the third one is the word **Patience**. Patience is this long enduring. But notice in this context, it's not patience with circumstances. You look at yourself, and you look at this thing you've got ahead of you this week, and you go, "Oh, man, I am going to need the patience of Job to get through this week. He's not talking about patience with circumstances and situations. He's talking about patience with people.

14:56

Be marked. Walk worthy of the call in that when you're walking worthy of the call, you are putting up with the idiosyncrasies, with the irritations, with the immaturity, with the offensive weirdness of your brothers and sisters in Christ. If you walk in a manner worthy of the call you realize that I am not yet myself perfected, and so you give grace so to be long-suffering means "to stand under, long."

Most of us decide that, "I've put up with you long enough, and I'm just going to relocate myself. I'm going to find another church. I'm going to find another place to live. I'm going to find another place to do," probably the person that needs the most sympathy and empathy in our church.

You need to understand that my wife, for the last forty years, except for only seven years' interval, and even then she had to sit through my Sunday school teaching, Linda has only, fifty weeks out of the year, heard one voice in the pulpit ... and that's me! You think that gets on your nerves, can you imagine if anybody is a candidate for a church-membership relocation or something, it's my wife. He's talking about this patience, this long-suffering with each other. We usually get our feelings hurt, we usually run out of patience with one another, and we just slide away.

And he says that's not what the mature people do. If you're walking worthy of the Gospel, you understand that God's grace

has done a work in you. He's doing a work in them as well, and you bear up together, long-term.

Last of all, he calls it the **Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace** or the **Unity of the Spirit in Shalom**. These are the things that glue the body together. We don't create unity. That was created in the work that Christ did on the cross and the Spirit did and bringing us to life. Instead we are to fight to maintain the unity.

Now the next thing he says then that there are **seven truths that glue us together**. What are the seven things that give us this kind of "stick-to-it-ive-ness?" What is it that He has done for us or given to us that would make it possible for us to walk in this maturity? The interesting thing about these is that many of them have become the very motivation for division as opposed to unity.

The first one is, **we all belong to one body**. As arrogant as we are, we would like to think that Faith Bible Church is the only real church show going on in Lincoln. And that's just not true. We're not the only thing God is doing in Lincoln. We're a part of what God is doing in His **body** in Lincoln. We're part of the church, and we're doing what God has asked us to do as a contributing part of the greater whole. There is only one body.

Linda periodically throws me a curveball right as I'm leaving the front door to go pick up the bagels for the grandkids and come out and make sure that the PowerPoint's working, which it isn't today, and all of those things. And right on the way out the door she said, "You know this morning around the world there are people that are choosing to go to church, to go to gatherings, knowing that they may be murdered for having gone to worship Jesus," while here, we're trying to decide whether we want to go or not, or rather maybe we ought to play eighteen holes, or maybe we ought to mow the back lawn, or maybe I ought to get my kids into some kind of Sunday-morning activity. While they're willing to die for the Gospel, we're kind of saying that's just one of many things. We're part of the part of them. We're part of them.

One of our elders, several of his meet every Sunday morning, eight o'clock, over here by the rescue board, and one of them, as he was praying, you know, he was praying for brothers and sisters that are ministering the word around the world. The next week we got together, and he said, "You guys realize that last week, while we were praying for our brothers sisters around the world, in northern Kenya a pastor and half of his family were murdered at church because they came to worship Jesus." We're one body. There's only one Spirit.

You guys are dropping off your wife for Bible study, and your kids at AWANA Wednesday night, you're trying to figure out where can I go and not get a bad cup of coffee, at Wal-Mart or something, drop into the conference room. And there we're sitting, we're reading the book of Acts together. And as we go through Acts, we found out that Luke's first volume on the earthly ministry of Jesus is the Gospel of Luke. But the second volume on the earthly ministry of the Gospel of Jesus, the bodily ministry of Jesus on earth, is the Acts. And in the Acts, it's the indwelling Holy Spirit that multiplies the ability for Christ to do works around the world. But there's only one Holy Spirit. There's not one for this denomination one and one for that. There's one Holy Spirit.

The third one is, there's **only one Hope**. There is only one hope.

20:00

There is only one great expectation. And this is the great ground of the division. Because we look at that, and we believe that the one hope is that this same Jesus whom you have seen "going to heaven and will return in like manner as you have seen Him go." And all of a sudden, we get our shorts and wrinkle over, "When's He going to do that?"

"I've got a low pain threshold. I believe that it's pre-tribulation, we're just out here. I just don't want to go through it." I've got some really godly friends that believe they we're going to go about halfway through the war, and then we'll be taken, and others think, "Well, after all of that seven-year stuff is over, and then

we'll go." I even have some friends that don't think that we're going to go at all! He's going to come, and He's is going to clean things up here on earth.

We get to arguing over our hope, and we forget what the hope is. The hope is not a calendar event. It's not the timing. As my son said yesterday as we are leaving the football game, he said, "Can you imagine Tim LaHaye right now? You know, you've got the blood moon, and you've got the Pope speaking at the UN. He's probably got a whole library he's going to publish this week." I mean, we get all excited and all twisted about what the hope is.

We forget the hope is, He promised that He will return. This same Jesus which has gone up from you will return. We share that together. That's the glue that keeps us here. That's the blessed hope, that's reason we're here is because we know that He who has promised has never broken a promise, and He's soon going to return.

Then the fourth one is that we have **One Lord**, one master, one that we bow to, we take our direction from, only one. And yet there was a season when great theologians would write books, lots of books, on whether it's possible to accept Jesus as your Savior and delay your decision as to whether at some point you'll let Him be the Lord of your life or not. And I'm thinking, "How can you read the book and come to that conclusion? Why would you even propose such a thing? Because the reality is that you were dead in your trespasses and sin. You are a sinner from birth. You are spiritually unresponsive. You're living in darkness, and you can't find the light. You have a debt to pay, and you can't pay, but He paid your debt for you. Your debt was death, and He died in your place. And now you want to embrace THAT part of it, but you want to step back and say, "I know You love me, and You died for me and all that, but I'm just not quite sure I want You to run my life."

Paul says, "No, the thing that glues us together is there is this one common Lord. We all take our direction from Him." Jesus is the

senior pastor, not only at Faith Bible Church but of every Bible-believing church in Lincoln and around the world.

And then there is this **One Faith**, this one, later in the text called THE faith. It is this body of truth. There is this one message from God that is reliable. This is, as our friend says, “This is the breath of God.” And His breath is always fresh. This is the faith. We hold that in common. We hold these truths as non-negotiable. That’s what holds us together. We don’t always interpret them the same way. We wrestle with it together. And you’ll hear me say something as I’m unpacking this text, and then you’ll go home over lunch and say, “Man, I don’t know if Tom’s right or not.” But you’re examining that, not on the basis of your own experience or some kind of special message. But you’re doing it on the basis of what the Scriptures say. We hold that one faith.

And then last of all that **One Baptism**. And again we’re divided over that. “What’ya mean that one baptism? You mean like sprinkling or pouring or dipping or full immersion? What about babies? Should be put a little water on the babies, like they’re not already wet enough? What is essential?” All of a sudden, again we get divided over the thing that unifies.

But the truth of the one baptism that Paul has in mind is what he said in **Romans 6**. “We have all by faith been buried with Him in baptism.” We have died with Him, and we’ve shared in His death; therefore, we have been raised up with Him to newness of life.” That’s what holds us together. We have one baptism, that is, that we have been united with Christ in His death, and we have been raised with Christ to newness of life; therefore, we don’t walk like we used to walk.

And last of all is, there’s only **One God and Father**. All roads don’t lead to God. There’s only one God, and there’s only one truth, and that’s what glues us together. And he says but with all of that unity there is also this diversity.

Notice ...

Ephesians 4:7

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

... grace, a gift from God.

On His triumphal entry as He returns from the battle with the powers and principalities of the heavens and all of those evil forces, and as he rises from the grave and He defeats the last enemy, death itself, in that triumphal return, He takes all of those and gives away the gifts. And here it is, that spiritual enablement, that special ability to do something that is not natural to yourself, that some way that you can come into the life of your brothers and sisters, and in your serving attitude, you can do something that not only causes them to grow but causes God to be glorified in the growth. There's a whole list of these, and when we get, eventually, to the book of **Acts**, we'll pick up on them again.

In the margin of your Bible or on your electronic device, put down **Romans 12**, **1 Corinthians 12**, as well as **Ephesians 4**. Now none of those are an exact duplicate of the other list, but it indicates that God works marvelously and sovereignly in all of our lives by giving to each of us, at the moment we trust Jesus, a unique, special ability, something only you can do, for the strength and the growth of the body. And He empowers it by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

He gives us special gifts. Some of those gifts, according to **1 Peter 4**, are speaking gifts. Some have this great ability to articulate and encourage through the articulation. Others have great serving gifts. They just come in behind, and they make it possible for others to grow and mature because they do the unsung hero kind of thing.

And then he moves us to the **Leadership**. I want you to notice what he says ...

Ephesians 4:11-12

¹¹ And he gave the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the

work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

He gives leaders to the church. But I want you to notice that in leaders, he doesn't define "leader" as somebody who has lots of people serving under Him. But rather a leader is someone who is serving lots of people, that he is using his God-given responsibilities and enablements in order to enlarge and enhance the ministry of others. Literally, it's the unleashing of gifts. It's sharing the joy of ministry, not dumping undesirable duties.

When we recruit, you know, you always go to somebody and say, "We need some help here." That's probably the worst recruiting line in the world. Who wants to sign up to do something that anybody can do? Nobody. If somebody else can do it, why don't they do it? I want to sign up to do something that makes a difference nobody else can make. God does the recruiting by giving us spiritual gifts. If you're a leader, and you're looking to recruit, you need to look at people say, "What are your unique spiritual gifts? What your passion? Where is your heart?"

"I have a ministry for you that nobody else can do, because nobody else has been equipped by God for doing it. That's what the leaders spiritually do.

Now he defines those leaders here as the **Apostles**, which is the foundation for the church. Those are the ones who had the authoritative message from God until we had this word. They are the ones that God had sent out to explain the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The **Prophets** were those that before, again, we had the written text that God would supernaturally communicate through to His people. We kind of get that all twisted up. We think in terms of prophets, that ability to predict what's going to happen in the future, but most of the ministry of the prophets was not prediction. Most of it was confrontation. Most of the time they were up in somebody's grille saying, "You know God wants you to turn from your ways and turn back to Him." It was the

authoritative stepping saying, “I have a word from the Lord for you, and He’s calling you back to Himself.”

Then he goes on, not only the prophets, but also the **Evangelists**. There are evangelists that do the work of God by being articulate in sharing the Good News. There’s something about their unique gifting that when they explained to lost people, to dead spirits, that Christ has saved them, offered them salvation by grace, people hear them, and they respond to it. My father had that gift. I don’t have that gift. I would like to have that gift, but Paul said that you don’t get a pass on not doing evangelism if you don’t have the gift. Because as he said to Timothy while he’s pastoring in Ephesus, he says, “Do the work of an evangelist.” So all of us have this responsibility to reach as many as are called.

But God has uniquely gifted some to teach us how to do it better. That’s what these evangelists are. They are equipping evangelists who are able to explain. How do you approach someone with the Good News? How do you explain to them in a way that they can receive it and understand it?

And then there’s the one, most authors couple it as one gift, the **Pastor-Teacher**. The pastor-teacher is the shepherd that needs to come under the people’s lives. He needs to guide and feed the flock. He needs to care for them. He couples that with the gift of communicating God’s word in order to encourage the saints. So the pastor-teachers are given by God for this purpose that he can equip the saints to do the work. Not so that they can work themselves hard doing it for the people, but they can work themselves diligently to help the people do the ministry God’s given them.

30:03

Now, there’s an inversion org chart that will show up again when we get to **Acts**, but the normal flow the corporate-America flow of the org chart for the church is one on the left. And that’s basically where the pastor is the boss, and the pastor says, “This is what God wants us to do,” and he tells the elders what God wants them to do, and then the elders go, and they relay that to the leaders,

and the leaders tell the people, and they go out and do what the top-down said they should do.

I think if you read the Scriptures rightly, you will find that you invert that. Elders and pastors hear the heart of God, and they declare the direction they believe that God wants His church to go. And they communicate that to the leaders who get excited about that, and they began to magnify and multiply ministry. And they pass it on to the members of the body. And the members of the body, using their unique spiritual gifts, they take that vision, and they enlarge it and they give color to it.

So the mark of a great leader, again, is not how many people serve under them, but how many people are you serving.

I like what John MacArthur put in his commentary on **Ephesians 4**. He said ...

When people come to faith in Christ, and they begin to understand that God in His Spirit has uniquely empowered and enabled them for ministry, out of the energy of the Spirit and the excitement for their new life in Christ, they will create many ministries in the church.

In other words, the growth of the church is dependent upon those whom He has empowered and gifted.

And now he describes for us what exactly the battle is going to look like as we do that ...

Ephesians 4:13

until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

Notice first of all, we have to fight for unity. With your spiritual gift you are exercising that unique, God-given ability in order to facilitate the growing and the maintaining unity of the body. And to maintain unity is just simply a fight. It's hard work. The Adversary divides. It's been doing it since the garden. He did it between Adam and Eve. He brought division between them, and

he has used that strategy over and over. And he will use it today. He's got one offensive play in his playbook. We keep creating defensive playbooks to kind of counter it, and he just keeps throwing the same thing at us. And that is, "I'm going to come in where the Spirit of God is at work, and I'm going to bring division."

The second thing that is in the fight is, we have to pursue a knowledge of Christ. The "knowledge" word here is for "personal-known intimacy." It's the "oneness" that we have in Christ. And it's a result of being ministered to from the word. The knowledge of the Son of God that you didn't come here this morning in order to see me, you came here this morning because you wanted to see Christ as alive and new and fresh. So we come together to seeking this greater knowledge of Him, and then also to a mature manhood. Maturity is simply having grown and developed coordination and health and ability that would represent someone that is full grown, that is grown up.

And then the next one that he talks about is **stability**.

Ephesians 4:14

so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

You know that you're beginning to grow spiritually mature when you're beginning to hear strange and new ideas and you filter it through your discernment filter, and you say, "You know, that's a novel, that's an interesting kind of twist on things, but my understanding of the word says that's wrong." I'm not easily shaken when some new interpretation or some new application from the Scriptures comes along. But I step back and say, "Wait a minute. Knowing the Scriptures I know that that can't be true."

And then notice that he says over and over ...

Ephesians 4:16

from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

... charity.

The unifying factor in everything that God does is reflecting His love toward us. That's what He says in ...

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Here he says that we come to maturity, we build ourselves up spiritually when we demonstrate love, one for the other.

Now in **Colossians 1:28** when he talks about everyone coming to maturity in Christ he's talking about individual, personal maturing. When he comes to **Ephesians 4**, he's talking about a church congregation coming to maturity. How do we, together, grow up to a healthy man? And in that there has to be the expression of love. And what that simply means is that I have to be humble enough to recognize that I am not yet fully grown. I'm not yet fully developed. And that there are still some rough edges in my life, and if someone cares enough to come to me and say, “You know, I'm a bit concerned about this attitude or this action that I see your life, that it is leading you astray,” that rather than get defensive and argumentative as painful as it is, that I receive that. I contemplate that. I say, “There must be a seed of truth in there that God wants me to hear.

It's also caring enough about each other that when we see a brother or sister beginning to wander, as we study in Proverbs, off of the path, getting close to the thorn bushes on the hedge along the side, that we go to them and we ask how we can minister to them, that we have the courage rather than say, “Well, it's not my problem, that's their problem, it's not my concern. I've got enough problems of my own, but rather it's saying, “You know, as their brother in Christ, for the maturity of the church, I have to go to them. I have to speak the truth in love.”

Equipping everyone to serve and many to lead, four areas of concentration. If we're going to become a fully mature church, a healthy church, a church that honors the Lord and reflects His grace in our lives, these four things we have to do.

Number one, we have to **fight for unity**. We can't be satisfied with divisions among us. Like I said, I'm fourth generation believer, multiple pastors and missionaries in the family. I've been pastoring for forty years. And the one thing that destroys the move of the Spirit is disunity, internal fighting. Somebody with supersensitive feelings, easily offended, somebody that didn't feel understood. They ran into a brick wall when they had a dream or vision. They were trying to use their spiritual gifts, and there was a glass ceiling placed on it, and suddenly feelings are hurt, and it's time to leave.

The second one is **displaying the graces**. He gave each of us spiritual gifts. This church will never be healthier than the weakest spiritual gift exercise. In other words, if there are a few members who are consumers not contributors, then we are stymied, we are injured in the season of growth. Every single believer has been given uniquely something by God that He will empower to use to bring growth in the lives of others and glory to Himself.

And last of all we have to **take the risk of truthing in love**. We have to care deeply one for another. You have to care enough to go as say, "You know, it seems to me that you're floundering, you're struggling, you're discouraged. It seems to me like maybe there's a spirit of rebellion in you. Can I in love help you walk back into obedience?"

There were 89,899 of us cheering twenty-two hard-working young men who were working their fannies off on the field. But the most beautiful part of the game was at the end. There were all these guys that recognize what really matters the most.

**HUSKERS & OPPONENTS' POST-GAME PRAYER
CIRCLE**

If we're going to become a mature church, it's going to require that some of us experts, out of shape in the stands, go down on the field, strap on the helmet, put some skin in the game, and learn to fight for the things that really matter and that really last. He's given us unique spiritual gifts for the purpose that I might invest my life, you might invest your life, in our brothers and sisters so that they might grow less like themselves and more like Jesus. And ultimately that He, the Father, might receive the glory.

For that reason the Apostle Paul says, and we do this as our benediction ...

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to HIM be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen? ... Amen.